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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast over a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, September 12, 1933.

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SALISBURY:

First on our program today we bring you our weekly garden calendar by Mr. W. R. Beattie of the Bureau of Plant Industry. During the last two or three garden calendar periods Mr. Beattie has emphasized the importance of your making an analysis of your home food requirements and planning a more definite system of producing and caring for your supplies of fruits and vegetables. I take for granted Mr. Beattie that you are following up where you left off last week.

BEATTIE:

Yes Mr. Salisbury, but first I'd like to read a letter I received a few days ago from a member of the Farm and Home Hour audience who lives at Mansfield, Louisiana. Here is what he says:

"Dear Mr. Beattie: As I enjoy your Tuesday Farm and Home Hour garden talks, I give you some of my home garden experiences, and my humble effort to supply table needs. I planted 27 different garden vegetables in 1933. Began planting January 5 but all of my crops were killed by the near zero weather of February 8. I planted again as soon as the weather permitted. Cabbage, bunch and pole snap beans, pole butter beans, turnips, lettuce, cucumbers, cantaloups, okra and squash, all did fine, also carrots and beets. Bunch butter beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, potatoes and English peas were almost a failure due to late planting, early plantings all have been killed by the freeze.

I have planted already for fall garden, beans, turnips, radishes, beets, carrots, lettuce, onions, spinach, bunch butter beans and will plant more turnips, mustard, potatoes and English peas during September and early October. We now have green peas, crowders and purple hulls in abundance, corn, okra, tomatoes, butter beans, also eggplant and bell peppers for daily use.

Having no market for our surplus, we secured a pressure canner, and have more than 400 cans, quarts and half-gallon jars put up for winter. We canned cabbage, turnip greens, carrots, beets, beans, corn, squash, okra, tomatoes, green peas, butter beans, pickled cucumbers, and peaches. We also preserved peaches, made peach and apple marmalade, apple, peach, plum and muscadine grape jelly in abundance, therefore we will not go hungry the coming winter. I am nearly blind, almost to a man's allotted time of life, but I worked my hand tools and hand plow, producing all of the above by my own labor, preferring to wear out instead of rust out".

That is the story of a man who is doing his part. As he says in his letter, he and his family will not go hungry next winter with over 400 cans and jars put away, and a fall and winter garden coming along with a prospect of plenty of fresh vegetables for use direct from the garden all winter.

(over)

That struck me as being such a good letter and report that I am passing it on to you. This man's experience illustrates what a great many of you southern gardeners can do this fall and winter, but I want to remind you again that land taken out of cotton production under government contract must not be used for growing onions, cabbage, spinach and other truck crops for the market. You can grow all you want to for home use but not for sale.

Reports of damage to gardens due to the tropical storm that struck the Atlantic Seaboard August 23rd are continuing to flow into our office. In many cases the fall plantings of spinach, kale, turnips and sprouting broccoli were entirely destroyed. In a few localities the salt water from the bays and large coastal rivers flooded the gardens and destroyed the crops. Where this has happened it may not be too late to replant and still get late fall and early winter crops. In the home garden it is often possible to cover and protect the late crops in case of an early freeze and in that way get the benefit of them. My advice is to go ahead and replant most of these crops. There is some question as to the effect of salt water but most of our vegetables are fairly tolerant of a moderate amount of salt and the chances are that they will not be hurt by the small amounts of salt that may remain in the soil. A few good rains will wash this salt out of the soil.

At this time the thing that concerns you northern gardeners is to provide for the safe storage and preservation of the products you have in your gardens. As I suggested last week, certain of the garden products may be canned to advantage, but the majority of them may be kept in good condition by proper methods of storage. I'd like to urge each and every one of you northern gardeners who have anything in your gardens that is worth storing to provide a suitable place to store them. The time is getting short now, frost will soon kill our garden crops, and we need to get busy. First of all, if you do not already have a good storage cellar, I would suggest that you consider the cellar or basement under your house. A great many farm houses are heated by means of stoves and fireplaces and the cellars are not influenced by the heat of a furnace. This makes it possible in many cases to provide ideal conditions for storing potatoes and the various root crops in the cellar.

It may be necessary to partition off a room in one corner of the cellar where by securing plenty of ventilation the temperature can be kept down around 38 or 40 degrees for the storage of carrots, beets, cabbage, turnips and apples. Your potatoes should be stored separate from the root crops because they will have the best eating quality if kept at a temperature around 50 degrees. The whole problem is largely one of temperature control through ventilation during the early fall and of banking or otherwise protecting the storage cellar to keep out the cold later as winter comes on. I am calling this storage matter to your attention now as a suggestion that you make provision for the storage of your garden products in ample time. Next week I plan to give you a few pointers on the best methods of handling fruits and vegetables for storage.